

EXHIBIT A

Dear Judge Swain,

To say that Bob and I are soulmates is an accurate term. We are there for each other, in good times and bad. We prop each other up and remain rock steady when needed. Most importantly, Bob has been at my side, and my caregiver, through many serious medical issues, and unfortunately I have had to rely on Bob more and more.

Over the last 14 years I have suffered from many illnesses and injuries.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

These are just some of my medical problems, which are recurring. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Before all these health issues, I was a healthy and physical education teacher, athletic and played competitive tennis. You would never know that from seeing me today.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Even when I am home, not in the hospital, there is much I cannot do, and many chores and household responsibilities at our home have fallen upon Bob. I do not know how I could manage our home and all the responsibilities that come with that on my own, without Bob.

I am also concerned about our financial condition. Bob is the primary earner in our family, as when I am working as a teacher's aide, [REDACTED]. We have limited assets and are losing them as a result of the forfeiture, penalties, and the cost of the legal process. This in itself is a huge punishment. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] My job does not bring in enough money to cover our expenses and I don't even know how long I will be able to continue working given my health. I do not know how I will pay bills, including our mortgage bills, without Bob being home to earn an income, and we will lose our home.

I also want to tell you about Bob as a person. He is truly selfless, and does so much for others—not just me. During the last 4 years Bob was instrumental in providing care to my mother. Due to my medical issues, I could not do much for my mother physically. Bob stepped up and handled many of the everyday tasks and chores associated with her well-being. He was always at the ready to help or step in, whether it be picking my mother off the floor when an aide dropped her, ensuring that she was properly fed, making repairs in her apartment, and most importantly, just visiting her every day and spending time with her. Unfortunately, my mother recently succumbed to the ravages of Alzheimer's Disease. Watching her aging process and the issues that come with Alzheimer's Disease, and guiding her through her final stages in life, has led Bob to offer his services to a local non-profit organization that specializes in providing services to needy elders. The non-profit group, Long Island Family and Elder Care, is local and supports its activities through a "Trading Post." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Volunteers with the Long Island Family and Elder Care led Bob and I to another source of aides, and we were able to find different aides that were competent and caring to assist with my

mother. Having learned about this important organization, Bob has spoken to people there about volunteering his time to help in whatever way he can be most useful. He is waiting for an assignment, and he hopes to start on a regular basis very soon.

On top of everything else, Bob also assists in raising our grandchildren. In total we have three grandchildren: [REDACTED] Our youngest son Ryan and my daughter-in-law Marissa have two children ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]) who are 15 months apart, both under the age of two, and they are expecting their third child in October. Our son has a demanding job which takes him out of the house for 15 hours a day. Our daughter-in-law regularly relies upon Bob and me to provide child care. Bob and I work as a team, but as there are certain things I cannot physically do, Bob must complete these tasks. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] has developed a reliance on his time with his grandfather, and looks for Bob to be there for him. Bob has been, and is, instrumental to [REDACTED] development. Bob is also spending a lot of time with [REDACTED], and helping with her needs. Bob helps no matter how busy he is—whether it be a bath, a walk with the kids, dinner or bedtime. Knowing how important time is with the grandkids, and helping out our son and daughter-in-law, many times we get home from babysitting at 11:00 PM. Bob then pulls out his own work or the work that needs to be done at our house, and continues working for several more hours. Even though he is tired, he is always putting others' needs above his own, and helps them before himself.

Because I thought it would be helpful to the Court, I wanted to provide a few other examples of Bob's caring nature. [REDACTED]

Recently, during the big snowstorm in January of this year, Bob dropped me off at an appointment and waited in the car for me nearby. I looked out the window from my appointment and observed him carrying groceries through the snow for various people. When I finished my appointment and asked what he did while I was inside, he only told me he did some reading—and he did not mention the random acts of kindness I observed.

Bob loves being with children, his own and others. Despite Bob's work schedule, he coached baseball and soccer, was a Boy Scout leader (Bob is an Eagle Scout), and has also worked with serving the needs of children as part of the Board of an after school center in our district. When the local community was expanding the after school

program and offering a breakfast program, Bob did not hesitate to help. He offered his time and accounting services pro bono, in an effort to boost this new non-profit program. Today this after school program services the needs of many families in the Bellmore-Merrick school district. Community service and the welfare of children have always been a focal point of Bob's life.

Bob is the first to admit, and take responsibility for, what he did. It tortures him daily to see the devastation he has caused to me and his family. But what happened was completely out of character. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Whatever the cause, he is so remorseful and broken-hearted for what he did and for how it has hurt those around him. For all the good he has ever done, Bob now knows he is measured by this uncharacteristic wrongful act.

Bob and I are religious in our beliefs and we are active church goers. We have raised our children with a strong religious conviction and we try to live our lives with such conviction. In fact, we ran our religious award program with the local Boy Scout group. We have been close with Father Gallagher, who not only married us, but who took Bob through his religious education in converting to Catholicism, and who was a fixture as the officiant at all our family weddings, baptisms, and most recently, my mother's funeral. Father Gallagher has been a strong support for Bob in helping him cope with these recent events.

Before Bob was arrested, we were well-respected in the community. This has been taken away and Bob knows he is to blame for this. You can see the remorse in everything he does and the way he now acts. It is painful to see this once-proud father, husband and neighbor go through the mental anguish Bob is now constantly living. He also sees what he has done to me—the stress and anger I feel at times when I think about his actions. He wishes he could do it all over again and make different choices, but he cannot, and so he is living with his actions and the consequences every day. Bob is suffering daily, and his mental punishment manifests into physical stress and anguish.

Bob and I are also both haunted by reliving the day of Bob's arrest. We were awoken by the banging on the door in the early morning, and when we looked out the window we saw the front lawn covered with armed agents. I am haunted by the humiliation of having my husband stripped in front of strangers, the man-handling of myself by agents who kept trying to get me to sit even though I physically was unable, the taunting tone of agents stating that others in our family were going to be arrested. I then had to go downstairs without my glasses, so that I was not only in jeopardy of falling but I was also unable to see what was going on. Agents were rooting through our house for "firearms," yet we are so against weapons because Bob's grandfather, an avid hunter, accidentally shot and killed himself, so even the thought of having firearms in our house is so disturbing to us. I relive the trauma of these events every day, and there is not a night that I sleep through and not a morning I do not wake and dread looking out the

window. I know Bob is going through the same trauma. While not a punishment in the physical manner, it is a mental punishment that will outlast any sentence and will be with us forever.

I beg of you to look at Bob as a whole, the entirety of who he is—a caring, compassionate person who touches on many lives and hopes to continue this positive impact in both my life, his family and his community. He has suffered disgrace and financial disaster, and he sees his future in business greatly curtailed. His source of earning and support for me in my current medical state makes it a necessity that he remain free of incarceration. And finally, please help me survive by allowing him to be by my side to monitor my medical conditions and to help me with everyday necessities. Without him being by my side I am at risk. I do not know what I would do without him there to help me and look over me.

For all these reasons, and the reasons you can see in the type of person he is, I beg of you to consider mercy, knowing he has suffered greatly in so many aspects of this matter, and grant him leniency in your judgment. Please allow this man to continue to provide the care I need to survive, the assistance and help given to his grandchildren, and allow the community to continue to benefit from his charitable donation of his time.

Sincerely yours,

Claudia Stewart

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